

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Buescher Band Instrument Company Building

and or common The Buescher Building

2. Location

street & number 225 East Jackson Avenue N/A ___ not for publication

city, town Elkhart N/A ___ vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Elkhart code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Hayes D. Warning; D & W, Inc.

street & number 941 Oak Street

city, town Elkhart N/A ___ vicinity of state Indiana 46516

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Elkhart County Recorder

street & number Elkhart County Courthouse

city, town Goshen state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered	X original site
X good	ruins	X altered	moved date
fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Buescher Band Instrument Company Building is located just across the river and east of downtown Elkhart, occupying 3.1 acres at the corner of East Jackson Boulevard and Clark Street. The two-story, painted brick industrial building is in a U-shaped plan with the base of the U facing Jackson. The oldest part of the building, built in 1904, is at the northeast corner of the building, and can be identified by its smaller windows. With the rapid growth of the business, the building was expanded in 1909 and 1914, with additional wings added in 1920, 1922, and 1923. Structures at the south end were added in 1946. A small, detached frame shed at the south end was built c. 1910. (See 1951 fire insurance map.)

Throughout, the structure is fairly uniform with only the heavy timbers and bay sizes varying in dimension. Running north to south through the center of the buildings are two light courts, one slightly offset in plan from the other. Both are surrounded by masonry walls with large windows of size similar to the streetfront windows. (See photo #6.) These courts define the separation of the additions to the building.

The original building is nine bays across on the Jackson Boulevard (north) facade. (Photos 1 and 2.) Entrances are located in the easternmost bay and the second bay from the west end, but both are altered. (The west door may originally have been a window.) Ground floor windows are rectangular, industrial-type metal sash, with 25 lights each. All but three have been closed. Upper floor windows are similar but shorter, with 20 lights each, and all are intact. All window sills and heads are of concrete in the post-1914 sections, but are mixed in the older parts of the building.

Continuing east along Jackson is the 1923 addition. There is no break in the wall surface between the two buildings, but the openings are treated differently here. This section is seven bays across, each bay being slightly recessed. The bays are wider, with each containing two industrial-type metal sash separated by a mullion, each sash having 30 lights on the ground floor and 24 on the second story. A single door takes up part of the center bay; the two eastern bays have been changed on the ground floor to accommodate a retail business.

The east side of the building is treated the same way. There are 17 bays on this side, with garage entrances in the fifth and eleventh bays from the front. (Photos 1 and 3.)

The west elevation shows the older buildings (nine bays) at the north end, with a c. 1920 addition at the south (seven bays). (Photos 2, 4.) Each ground floor bay has two sash with 30 lights each, separated by a mullion; and the second story has similar sash with 24 lights. The southernmost bay is narrower than the others. A garage door occupies the third bay from the north, and the two northernmost windows have been closed. Whereas the wall plane of the older building is continuous, the bays of the rear addition are recessed, like those on the east side of the building, and windows are very similar. A garage door is located on the sixth bay from the south, and in the southernmost bay is a double-leaf, wood freight door, above grade.

The rear, or south, elevation features the same type of fenestration seen on the east and west sides, with the one-story, 1946 additions toward the west end (photo 5). An interior brick smokestack is located about 50 feet from the west end of the facade. The detached frame shed is located at the east end of the rear elevation, and is L-shaped with a cross gable roof.

The building is currently occupied by several small businesses.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	architecture	education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater	
X 1900-	communications	X industry	politics government	transportation	
		X invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1904-1923 **Builder Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Buescher Band Instrument Company Building is an important representative of the band instrument industry in Elkhart, once known as the "Band Instrument Capital of the World." The production of band instruments in Elkhart was begun during the 1870s, when F. A. Buescher and C. G. Conn began producing hand-made band instruments. By the early 20th century the Buescher and Conn companies were nationally known and Elkhart had become the center of band instrument production with at least four companies. It appears that the peak period for this industry in Elkhart was the 1910s to the 1920s, although the industry still exists in the city today at a much-reduced level. The Buescher factory is one of the oldest and largest band instrument manufacturing facilities remaining in the city.

Ferdinand August Buescher began making band instruments in 1878, as an employee of C. G. Conn Band Instrument Company. About ten years later he opened his own instrument shop on Pacific Street. In the beginning Buescher's factory was quite small, and he did much of the work himself, including designing, manufacturing and selling the instruments. However, his factory grew quickly and by 1903 employed more than 100 men and women at the factory at North Main and Simonton Streets. Bank failure by the Indiana National Bank, the owner of Buescher's building, forced him into bankruptcy. But the success of his early factory enabled Buescher to secure the necessary financial backing for the construction of the first phase of his Jackson Street factory in 1904.

The construction, funded by John W. Fieldhouse, enabled Buescher to move his operation from North Main Street to a location near the river and one block away from Buescher's rival, the C. G. Conn Company. That proximity was brief, however, because the Conn factory burned down within a few years and rebuilt on another Elkhart site. Employing over 300 people at its peak, the Buescher factory had the advantage of public transportation on Jackson Boulevard. The Buescher Band Instrument Company Building is one of the last remaining original factory buildings of the group that made Elkhart the "Band Instrument Capital of the World." Along with Conn, the largest manufacturer of school band instruments, and the Martin Band Instrument Company, a smaller firm, Buescher dominated the American and international markets with its high quality brass band instruments.

Buescher was noted worldwide for his "mechanical" inventions, which improved the quality and dependability of the sound of the saxophone to the extent that the instrument known as the Buescher "C" Melody Saxophone caused a craze in the 1920s. Paul Whiteman, Fred Waring, and Rudy Vallee, among others, used the Buescher instruments which accounted for 95% of all the saxophones sold in the country during that period. In addition to the "C", the company produced soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass saxophones, clarinets, flugel horns, mellophones, baritone horns, cornets, and trumpets. Professional musicians were the main market for the Buescher high-quality instruments; however, after careful testing and official scrutiny, some horns were made for government issue to the armed services. The company grew and expanded on this same site until 1963, when it was purchased by H. & A. Selmer, another band instrument manufacturing company. Selmer ceased manufacturing at this building in 1973, when they moved to a new industrial park location. It was purchased by the present owner at that time, and has housed several small businesses since then.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 3 acres (+)

Quadrangle name Elkhart, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	8	5	7	1	0	4	6	1	5	4	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Weyrauch / Architect

organization Booth/Hansen & Associates, Ltd. date May 19, 1986

street & number 555 South Dearborn Street telephone 312/427-0300

city or town Chicago state Illinois 60604

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Richard Hart for J. M. Pelenow*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 7-23-86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Buescher Band Instrument

Continuation sheet Company Building Item number 9 and 10 Page 1

1. Anderson, Emil. Taproots of Elkhart History. The Daily Truth, Elkhart, May, 1949.
2. Butler, George W. The Manual of Elkhart. Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, 1889.
3. Fieldhouse, Charles H. For Land Sakes, 73 Years in Real Estate, Elkhart, 1956.
4. "Old Buescher Building Coming Down." The Elkhart Truth, October 11, 1973.
5. "Buescher Building Not Coming Down After All." The Elkhart Truth, January 2, 1974.
6. "Historic Elkhart Firm to Continue Operations." The Elkhart Truth, February 7, 1963.

Item number 10

Beginning at a cut on the west line of Clark Street as the same is platted and used in the City of Elkhart, Indiana, where the same is intersected by the westerly extension of the south line of East Lexington Avenue; thence north 1 degree 34 minutes east along the west line of said Clark Street to the south line of East Jackson Boulevard; thence north 88 degrees 43 minutes west along the south line of East Jackson Boulevard 286.5 feet to a cut that is north 88 degrees 43 minutes west 216.5 feet (measured along the south line of said East Jackson Boulevard) from the southwest corner of said East Jackson Boulevard and Clark Street, said point being the northwest corner of said Lot 1 in FIELDHOUSE'S SEVENTH ADDITION; thence south 1 degree 17 minutes west along the west line of said Lots 1 and 2 in said addition 200 feet; thence south 1 degree 58 minutes east along the westerly line of said Lot 3 in said addition 80.13 feet to the southwest corner of said Lot 3, said point being north 88 degrees 43 minutes west 210.58 feet from the west line of Clark Street, thence south zero (0) degrees 15 minutes east across vacated East Lexington Avenue (Resolution No. 102, dated October 9, 1925) 50.02 feet to a cut on the south line of said vacated street, said point being north 88 degrees 43 minutes west 209 feet from the beginning point of this description; thence south 22 degrees 8 minutes east 118.6 feet; thence south 14 degrees 16 minutes east 361.18 feet; thence south 49 degrees 51 minutes east 98.53 feet to an iron stake at the intersection of the west line of Clark Street with the northwesterly line of Elkhart Avenue; thence due north along the west line of said Clark Street 518.75 feet to the place of beginning.

